of electromechanical exchanges. The replacement of Ajmer cross bar exchange is under examination by the CGM. Rajasthan circle.

(c) The various steps being taken to streamline the Telecom system further in Ajmer District are as follows :

1. Replacement of Electro-mechanical exchanges by Electronic Exchange.
2. Construction of cable ducts for protection of undergound cables.
3. Use of jelly filled cable.
4. Upgradation of external plant.
5. Computerisation of services.
6. Training of staff.
7. Provision of Optical Fibre Cable in the network.

(d) The services have not shown decline in its performance which on the countrary have improved over the years. Comparative performance for the last two years is shown below :

	May, 95	May, 96
Complaints (per 100 tele)	22.9	19.4
Faults (per 100 tele)	19.7	18.1

(e) The financial allocations for this year will be decided after finalisation of budget.

AIDS

2. SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the measures taken by the Government to check AIDS in the country;

(b) the number of persons who died of AIDS during the last three years and the details thereof, year-wise;

(c) whether Government have been successful in preventing this dreadful disease; and

(d) if so, the percentage thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) In order to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS in India a comprehensive programme is currently under implementation as a centrally sponsored scheme throughout the country. The strategies of the programme consist of generation of awareness amongst high risk behaviour groups and general public about HIV/AIDS, control of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Blood Safety and rational use of Blood, better surveillance; and diagnosis and clinical Management of HIV/AIDS cases.

(b) A *Statement* showing the number of persons who died of AIDS during the last three years alongwith year-wise details is enclosed.

(c) and (d). A comprehensive scheme for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS is currently under implementation in the country.

STATEMENT

S.No.	State/UT	Deaths due to HIV/AIDS year-wise			
		1993	1994	1995	1996
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1	-	4	1
2.	Assam	1	-	6	
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	
4.	Andaman and Nicobar Island	-	-	-	
5.	Bihar	-	-	-	
6.	Chandigarh (UT)	-	-	-	
7.	Punjab	30	-	30	
8.	Delhi	23	12	14	6
9.	Daman and Diu (UT)	-	-	-	
10.	Dadar and Nagar Haveli (UT)				
11.	Goa	8	1	-	
12.	Gujarat	3	-	4	
13.	Haryana	3	-	1	

1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Himachal Pradesh	-	1	4	
15.	Jammu and Kashmir	1	-	-	
16.	Karnataka	9	2	-	
17.	Kerala	40	-	10	
18.	Lakshadweep (UT)	-	-	-	
19.	Madhya Pradesh	14	-	-	
20.	Maharashtra	37	35	132	18
21.	Manipur	6	13	7	
22.	Mizoram	-	-	-	
23.	Meghalaya	-	-	-	
24.	Nagaland	-	1	2	
25.	Orissa	-	1	16	
26.	Pondicherry (UT)	6	-	40	
27.	Rajasthan	-	-	-	
28.	Sikkim	-	-	-	
29.	Tamil Nadu	10	23	60	40
30.	Tripura	-	-	-	
31.	Uttar Pradesh	6	-	4	
32.	West Bengal	12	2	13	
	Total	210	91	347	65

[English]

Freedom Fighter Pension

4. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to constitute an Advisory Committee to finalise the pending cases of freedom fighters for pension in the light of Supreme Court decision in CWP 153 of 1992;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Receipt and disposal of claims for grant of freedom fighters pension is a continuous process. The claims are examined in compliance with the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and decisions are taken immediately after scrutinising and verifying the genuineness of the documents submitted by the applicants in support of their claims. In view of this, Government does not consider it necessary to constitute an Advisory Committee.

[Translation]

Addiction to Smoking

5. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a steep rise in the cases of addiction to smoking among the people of the country during the last few years;

(b) whether the Government have conducted any survey to find out the reasons therefor;

(c) whether in view of the adverse affect of smoking on common man at public places and co-passengers in trains and buses, the Government propose to bring any stringent legislation in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and other measures being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) The Indian Council for Medical Research have concluded on the basis of available information that there has been an increase in smoking over the last 8-10 years.